

**BIBLIOTHEQUE**

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**M. L'ABBÉ VERREAU**

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A VISIT TO CANADA.



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## A VISIT TO CANADA.

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HAVING passed over the broad Lake Ontario, we entered the river St. Lawrence early in the morning, and were soon winding our way through the lake of the thousand isles,

“Those islands, which together lie  
As quietly as spots of sky  
Among the evening clouds.”

When these are passed, the noble river rolls majestically along, through quiet and lovely scenery, with now and then a mountain lifting its head in the blue distance. The rapids of the St. Lawrence had long been associated in our minds with the words of “the Canadian boat song,” in which Moore sweetly celebrates them; but “when the rapids were near,” we felt somewhat disappointed. However, the passage down “the Long Sault,” as it is called, quite equalled our expectations. The descent of the river is here very perceptible, the rapids very boisterous, and the current fearfully strong. Our good boat, “the Highlander,” with four men at the tiller, and four at the wheel to guide her, darted over the waters at the rate of twenty miles an hour, following the sharp bendings of the river with an air of great intelligence. It is only within a very few years that the passage of “the Long Sault” has been attempted by the larger steamboats, but from the admirable manner

in which our boat was managed there appeared to be no risk in navigation. We occasionally saw the Indian wigwam, on the banks of the river, and at times an Indian canoe, paddled by women, came out upon the stream, the faded remnants of a race who once owned these fair lands and broad waters. It is said that the meaning of the word Canada, in the Indian language, is "the land of the falling waters," which is certainly both poetical and descriptive.

Quebec and Montreal contain much to arrest the attention of a traveller from the United States. Quebec, standing on her proud height, with her strong citadel, high walls, bristling cannon, and red-coated soldiery, displays a new scene to untravelled eyes, while the old French town, its narrow dark streets, its high houses, with their strange, peaked roofs, and foreign-looking inhabitants, presents as strong a contrast as possible to a New England settlement.

We made the usual pilgrimage to the Plains of Abraham, and stood, as thousands have done, beside the spot where Wolfe fell. We have yet to learn, perhaps, that, in many a quiet home, and amid unnoticed scenes, men and women too, are laying down their lives, with as true a spirit of self-sacrifice as he, who, when told on that spot (after having received his death-wound) that the French fled, exclaimed, "Then I die contented."

While visiting the citadel, one of the soldiers showed us with much pride the royal banner of England, which was unfurled in honor of the anniversary of the Queen's coronation. It was the first time we had ever stood beneath her Majesty's banner, and this particular specimen had evidently "braved the battle and the breeze" for many a year. It is said that the sun never sets on the British dominions, and amid the various climes where the English flag is unfurled, it can float above few scenes more beautiful than that upon which it looks down from the citadel of Quebec.

Montreal is far more bustling and active than Quebec; and we happened to visit the city at the moment when it put on its gala dress to receive the governor, Sir Charles Met-

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calfe, the seat of government having been recently removed from Kingston to Montreal.

There was one place which interested us more than any other, in Montreal, and that was the humble apartment where, like the early Christians, the small Unitarian congregation were gathered together. The walls of their pretty church are however now rising, and with the aid which it has been the privilege of their brethren in the East to send them, the building will soon be completed. The Rev. Mr. Cordner's society, though yet small, will then be much increased, and in that small number there are now men, whose devotion to the cause of truth, and ability to support it, are like Peter the apostle, rocks, upon which the spiritual church will be firmly built. The Unitarian church in Montreal will have wide influences, for many of our faith are scattered through Canada, to whom the privilege of hearing any preaching consonant with their views is a blessing almost unknown. Many were educated as Unitarians in England and Ireland, and, removed to Canada, they cling firmly to their views of the Gospel, notwithstanding the disadvantage of having no church to draw them together, and amid the bigotry and uncharitableness by which they are surrounded:—bigotry and uncharitableness, which, alas, are all over the world, sad proofs how much more the letter than the spirit of the Gospel has been diffused.

After the simple services at the Unitarian chapel were concluded, we walked to the Catholic cathedral, which is the most imposing building of the kind in America. As we were entering the cathedral, the regiment of Highlanders passed, on their way to the Scotch church; they were in full uniform, kilts, tartans and feathers, but without music, and each carried in his hand a small Bible. They are a noble-looking band of men, and in their romantic dress make a fine appearance. Having just quitted our own most simple form of worship, and leaving the Highlanders to proceed on their way to listen to the old doctrines of the Scottish kirk, we entered the cathedral, to see another form in which the Christian religion is presented. The interior of the church is by no means equal to the exterior,



and we were told that the architect actually died of a broken heart from not being allowed to finish the interior according to his original plan ;—it may be true ; men have died in a less worthy cause. A number of priests in showy raiment were chanting before the altar in a very unmusical manner. Every thing around us afforded a striking contrast to the meeting we had just left, as great indeed as the difference between the views of the Christian religion presented in the two places of worship.

We were present the next day at a more imposing ceremony, at the cathedral, than the Sunday services exhibit. It was the day of St. John the Baptist, who is, we believe, the patron-saint of Montreal. The priests wore on this occasion very splendid robes, and chanted more unintelligibly than ever. There were about six thousand persons present, the church being able to contain ten thousand, and from every rank of life. In the centre of the broad aisle stood what appeared to be a very tall erection of cake decorated with sugar ornaments, rows of lighted candles, and ribbons, the whole thing being ten or twelve feet high, and mounted on wooden rollers. When the service was about half over, the crowd was dispersed to a proper distance, and the aisle cleared. Monsieur V., the president of the council, (near in rank to the governor,) a very gentlemanly looking Frenchman, with gray hair, and an order in his button-hole, came forward, leading Madame B., the lady of the mayor of Montreal, who held in her hand a lighted taper. Two gentlemen joined them, and holding the long ribbons attached to the gingerbread castle, it was rolled up by their attendants to the altar, where it was presented to the priest by the lady and gentlemen. The priests sprinkled the gift with holy water, and it was then rolled to the side of the altar, taken to pieces, and carried out of sight. This was called the presentation of the sacred bread, presented to the priests in honor of the saint, and afterwards, we believe, distributed among the people, but we did not see that part of the ceremony. The priests of the seminary, as they are called, who officiate at the cathedral, are immensely rich, being in

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fact the lords of the soil, and to whom large tributes are paid by those who reside on their land. Their country residence, called "the priests' garden," is a fertile and lovely spot, situated on the side of the mountain, and commanding one of the fairest prospects that can gladden the eye.

We were allowed to see the robes belonging to these priests, which are arranged with great care in a room adjoining the cathedral. These dresses, from the celebrated manufactories of Lyons, are splendid specimens of that department of art. The satins, velvets, and golden tissues of which they are composed, and the exquisite embroideries with which they are ornamented, can scarcely be surpassed by even a royal wardrobe. These dresses are only worn on great occasions, and some of them but once a year. In these magnificent robes do the men array themselves who profess to be the true representatives of the apostles—the humble fishermen of Galilee, and the followers of him who when on earth, had not where to lay his head, and who bade his disciples take no thought wherewithal they should be clothed! Well may those who wander so far from the precept, be unwilling that the book which contains it, should have free circulation among their people.

Nowhere in America, we suppose, is Catholicism so powerful as in Canada, and though we may not think that all the influences of that church are evil, nor that it is the only denomination which holds doctrines far removed from the simple truth of Christianity, yet many of her ceremonies, and much of her superstition, are most repugnant to our minds.

We profess, more than any other denomination of Christians, to go back to the apostolic simplicity of faith, to abjure creeds, and take the Bible alone for our guide. How steadfastly then should we labor for the diffusion of our views of Christ and his mission! Views which, like the clear light of the early morning, rising in the east, will gradually dispel the darkness of error and the mists of superstition, until the beams thereof enlighten every land with a glory that groweth brighter and brighter unto the perfect day.

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